

## Message Text

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 06193 131847Z

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 6193

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, US, AEMR

SUBJECT: EVACUATION OF AMERICANS FROM LEBANON

REF: BEIRUT 6163

1. SUMMARY. IN REVIEWING THREE POSSIBLE OPTIONS FOR EVACUATION, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS USE OF "FLUID DRIVE" OPERATION BY U.S. SIXTH FLEET TO EVACUATE 500-1000 AMERICANS AND OTHERS BY LANDING CRAFT FROM BEIRUT BAIN-MILITAIRE. ROAD CONVOY IS INFEASIBLE FOR REASONS OF SECURITY AND SHORTAGE OF GASOLINE, AS IS AIRPORT. WE PROPOSE EVACUATION OPERATION OCCUR ON JULY 21 OR 22. SECURITY SUPPORT FROM PLO IS ESSENTIAL. EMB PROPOSES THAT PROTECTIING POWER BE SELECTED (POSSIBLY FRANCE, EGYPT OR TUNISIA) AND THAT CAREFULLY WORDED

NOTICE BE PLACED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AND BROADCAST ON RADIO BEGINNING ABOUT JULY 17. ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS REQUIRED TO CLOSE EMB IN FIVE TO SEVEN DAY TIME FRAME INCLUDE PROPERTY, INVENTORIES, LOCAL EMPLOYEE STAFF, LEASE TERMINATIONS AND DISCUSSION FUNDING DETAILS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN CONNECTION WITH RECOMMENDATION THAT WE CLOSE TOWN THIS EMBASSY AND EVACUATE AMERICANS (REFTEL, THERE ARE THREE EVACUATION OPTIONS--BY ROAD CONVOY TO DAMASCUS, BY AIR FROM THE BEIRUT AIRPORT OR BY SEA VIA SIXTH FLEET.

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 06193 131847Z

3. WE HAVE USED ROAD CONVOY ON SEVERAL RECENT OCCASIONS AND THE LAST LARGE CONVOY ON JULY 4--ORGANIZED BY GERMANY EMBASSY--MOVED OVER 200 PEOPLE IN 80 VEHICLES SAFELY. SINCE THAT TIME, HOWEVER, THE PLO/LEFTIST FORCES HAVE SUFFERED SERIOUS SETBACKS AND WE ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO THEIR ABILITY TO PROVIDE A LARGE ESCORT FOR

THE

SIZE CONVOY NEEDED TO MOVE 500 TO 1,000 (POSSIBLY MORE) AMERICANS AND OTHERS FROM BEIRUT. WE WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF VEHICLES AND WE HAVE JUST FOUND OUT THAT THE EMBASSY'S EMERGENCY UNDERGROUND GASOLINE SUPPLY OF 1,000 GALLONS OF FUEL HAS BEEN STOLEN. WE DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FUEL FOR ROAD CONVOY FOR PROBABLE NUMBER OF PEOPLE INVOLVED, AND EVEN IF WE CAN FIND A SUPPLY, EXPOSING EVACUEES TO A LONG ROAD TRIP POSSIBLY WITH INADEQUATE SECURITY, PRESENTS AN UNDESIRABLE RISK.

4. THE AIRPORT OPTION IS WORKABLE PROVIDING THE CHRISTIANS CAN GUARANTEE NOT TO SHELL THE ACCESS TO AIRPORT AND AIRPORT PROPER DURING THE OPERATION. (AIRPORT HAS BEEN OUT OF COMMISSION EVER SINCE MEA PLANE WAS DEMOLISHED BY CHRISTIAN SHELL ON JUNE 28, EXCEPT FOR ONE ICRC AIRCRAFT WHICH CAME IN LAST WEEK.) THE TOWER AND AIRFIELD NAVIGATIONAL AIDS WERE NOT OPERATIONAL BUT THE RUNWAY, WHILE SLIGHTLY DAMAGED, CAN BE USED DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. ONE MAJOR PROBLEM WITH THIS OPTION IS OUR INABILITY TO GET SUFFICIENT GROUND TRANSPORT AND ADEQUATE SECURITY TO TRANSPORT EVACUEES TO THE AIRPORT. BUSES ARE DIFFICULT TO LOCATE AND, EVEN IF WE COULD LOCATE AN ADEQUATE NUMBER (WITH SUFFICIENT GASOLINE) IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ASSURE ADEQUATE SECURITY PROTECTION.

5. WE BELIEVE EVACUATION BY SEA IN EXERCISE SIMILAR TO THAT MOUNTED BY SIXTH FLEET ON 20 JUNE PROVIDES LEAST EXPOSURE AND WILL GIVE THE PLO FEWER SECURITY PROBLEMS. ASSUMING WE HAVE SECURITY GUARANTEES FROM PLO, WE RECOMMEND LANDING CRAFT FROM SIXTH FLEET BE BROUGHT IN TO THE BAIN MILITAIRE LANDING TO REMOVE EMBASSY PERSONNEL, AMERICAN CITIZENS AND OTHERS WHO MAY WISH TO LEAVE.

6. AS REPORTED IN BEIRUT 6116, THERE ARE SOME 42 USG EMPLOYEES, 950 AMERICAN CITIZENS AND ALIEN DEPENDENTS, 2500 OTHER NATIONALITIES AND 500 OTHERS. IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO ESTIMATE HOW MANY WILL GO OUT WITH US, BUT AT THE PRESENT TIME OUR VERY ROUGH ESTIMATE  
SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 06193 131847Z

IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN 500 AND 1,000. WHEN EVACUATION IS MADE PUBLIC, WE HOPE TO BE ABLE TO GET A MORE ACCURATE FIX ON OHE NUMBERS, BUT TO BE ON SAFE SIDE WE MUST BE PREPARED TO ACCOMMODATE MORE THAN 1,000 IF THIS BECOMES NECESSARY.

7. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE PLO, AS SUGGESTED IN BEIRUT 6163, WILL HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BY FRIDAY JULY 16, SO THAT WE CAN COMMENCE THE MASSIVE TASK OF CLOSING THIS EMBASSY. WE FORESEE THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS IN SUBSEQUENT FIVE TO SEVEN DAYS:

A. SATURDAY, JULY 17. CAREFULLY WORDED ANNOUNCEMENTS (WHICH WE ARE PREPARING IN DRAFT FOR CLEARANCE BY DEPARTMENT) WOULD BE ISSUED THROUGH LOCAL PRESS INDICATING THAT EMBASSY IS CLOSING TEMPORARILY AND THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS SHOULD LEAVE. THIS

NOTICE SHOULD ALSO BE BROADCAST ON LOCAL RADIO STATION, VOA AND POSSIBLY BBC, WE ANTICIPATE THAT THOSE LIVING IN WEST BEIRUT WOULD LEAVE WITH US, AND THOSE IN THE BEKAA, ESTIMATED AT 66, COULD IF THEY CHOOSE LEAVE VIA DAMASCUS. EFFORTS WOULD BE MADE TO NOTIFY EVACUEES FROM SIDON (ESTIMATED AT 57) THAT THEY COME TO BEIRUT BY ROAD IF THEY WISH TO LEAVE.

B. IN THE PERIOD JULY 17 THROUGH TUESDAY, JULY 20, WE WILL REFINER OUR ESTIMATE OF THOSE WHO WISH TO LEAVE AND GIVE AN UPDATE OF EXPECTED EVACUEES BY ABOUT JULY 20. DURING THIS SAME TIME FRAME, WE WILL BE PREPARING FOR CLOSING OF THE EMBASSY, INVENTORY WILL BE TAKEN, LOCAL EMPLOYEE PERSONNEL PROBLEMS DEALT WITH, AND SAFE STORAGE OF PROPERTY ARRANGED TO EXTENT FEASIBLE.

C. WE PROPOSE THAT THE ACTUAL EVACUATION TAKE PLACE ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, OR THURSDAY, JULY 22, UTILIZING, AS STATED ABOVE, LANDING CRAFT AT THE BAIN MILITAIRE AT A TIME SET BY WASHINGTON AND THE SIXTH FLEET.

8. WE WOULD PLAN TO USE THE BAIN MILITAIRE AS THE COLLECTION POINT FOR EVACUEES, ARRANGING FOR FINAL DOCUMENTATION AT THAT POINT PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF THE LANDING CRAFT. A COMMAND POST WOULD OPERATE WITHIN THE EMBASSY THROUGHOUT THIS INITIAL PHASE OF THE EVACUATION AND, AT THE DESIGNATED TIME, COMMUNICATIONS WOULD BE CLOSED DOWN FOUR HOURS BEFORE DEPARTURE AND THE LAST STAFF MEMBERS AT THE EMBASSY WOULD  
SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 06193 131847Z

DEPART FOR THE EVACUATION POINT.

9. AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS NAMING OF A PROTECTING POWER. OUR RECOMMENDATIONS TO DEPT IN DESCENDING ORDER ARE: THE FRENCH, THE EGYPTIANS OR THE TUNISIANS. THESE THREE EMBASSIES ARE IN OPERATION AND AT THIS JUNCTURE THEY ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE. (THE TUNISIAN EMBASSY, HOWEVER, IS RUN BY A CHARGE D'AFFAIRES.) MOST OTHER EMBASSIES ARE EITHER CLOSED OR REDUCED TO A PART-TIME PRESENCE, AND FEW ARE IN A POSITION TO TAKE ON THIS RESPONSIBILITY. IN FACT, THE THREE COUNTRIES PROPOSED ABOVE MAY BE RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE FUOL PROTECTINGLPPOWER RESPONSIBILITIES GIVEN THEIR OWN PROBLEMS IN OPERATING IN THIS CHARGED ENVIRONMENT AND THE FACT THAT THERE MAY STILL BE A SIZEABLE NUMBER OF AMERICAN CITIZENS REMAINING IN THE COUNTRY. ALSO, OUR PROPERTY HOLDINGS HERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL, AND AUB AND AUH REPRESENT AN ADDED BURDEN.

10. THE EMBASSY HAS 140 LOCAL EMPLOYEES (ALL CATEGORIES) ON THE ROLLS, MOST OF WHOM APPEAR FOR WORK EACH DAY. IN ADDITION, WE HAVE A LARGE NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WHO ARE ON LWOP AND ARE LOCATED ON THE OTHER SIDE. WE WILL NEED SEVERAL DAYS TO TERMINATE EMPLOYEES WHO WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO EITHER ASSIST THE PROTECTING POWER OR PROVIDE A NECESSARY FORCE FOR THE SAFEKEEPING OF USG PROPERTY. AT THE PRESENT TIME, WE ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF RETAINING 20 OR 25 EMPLOYEES AS BUILDING GUARDS AND MAINTENANCE

STAFF FOR THE CHANCERY PREMISES. THESE WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO THE GUARDS AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE IN YARZE. SEVERAL OF THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES ARE CHRISTIAN AND LIVE EITHER IN THE CHANCERY OR THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY AND MANY OF THEM MAY FEEL IN DANGER AND WISH TO LEAVE WITH US. THEY ARE PROVIDED FOR IN THE 500 "OTHER" FIGURE GIVEN ABOVE. SOME OF THESE EMPLOYEES WHO LEAVE ARE ELIGIBLE FOR IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S. SINCE THEY HAVE MORE THAN 15 YEARS' SERVICE. OTHERS MAY WISH TO RETURN TO CHRISTIAN SECTOR FROM SAFE HAVEN. SOME OF THE LOCAL EMPLOYEES WHO WILL BE TERMINATED WILL BE ENTITLED TO A RETIREMENT ANNUITY BUT OTHERS WILL BE ENTITLED TO TERMINATION SEVERANCE PAY. THEY WILL BADLY NEED THIS MONEY, AND IT WILL NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR US TO ASK THEM TO WAIT UNTIL RFC PARIS CAN MAKE PAYMENTS AND GET THE FUNDS DELIVERED. WE WILL HAVE SEPARATE RECOMMENDATIONS REQUESTING AUTHORITY TO MAKE PARTIAL TERMINATION PAYMENT FROM EXISTING FUNDS, SUBJECT TO ADJUSTMENT BY RFC PARIS WHEN THEY ARE ABLE TO FINALIZE THE MONEY DUE THE EMPLOYEES.

SECRET

PAGE 05 BEIRUT 06193 131847Z

11. WE HAVE COMMENCED PREPARATION OF PROPERTY INVENTORIES AND WILL HAVE THEM READY FOR TURNOVER TO A PROTECTING POWER WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK. THESE INVENTORIES WILL UNFORTUNATELY BE IN SUMMARY FORM SINCE THE POST HAS BEEN IN A HIGH STATE OF FLUX FOR ALMOST A YEAR AND A HALF, BUT THEY WILL BE IN GOOD ENOUGH FORM FOR MAJOR CONTROL PURPOSES. WE HAVE SOME 15 SETS OF FURNITURE LOCATED IN OUTLYING APARTMENTS WHICH WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE IN. ASSUMING WE ARE UNSUCCESSFUL IN THIS EFFORT, WE HAVE THE OPTION OF SEALING THE APARTMENTS OR CANCELLING THE LEASES AND WRITING OFF THE FURNITURE. WE MUST ASSUME THAT THE APARTMENTS WILL BE LOOTED IN SHORT ORDER, AND WE ARE THEREFORE INCLINED TO CANCEL THE LEASES AT TIME OF EVACUATION AND WRITE THE FURNITURE OFF.

12. WE PLAN TO PLACE SUCH THINGS AS RESIDENCE SILVER, ART, FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER ITEMS OF HIGH VALUE IN SAFES WITHIN VAULTS IN THE CHANCERY. SEPARATE MESSAGES WILL BE SENT WITHIN THE COMING DAYS CONCERNING DESTRUCTION OF CLASSIFIED FILES, COMMUNICATIONS AND CRYPTOGRAPHIC GEAR.

13. THE B&F OFFICER WILL CARRY OUT PERSONNEL FILES, ACCOUNTING DOCUMENTS, AS WELL AS ANY FUNDS WHICH WE HAVE ON HAND. SINCE THIS POST IS SERVICED BY RFC PARIS, FUNDS FOR THE SAFEKEEPING OF THE BUILDING AND THE CUSTODIAL STAFF SALARIES COULD BE A PROBLEM. IF WE HAVE PROTECTING POWER, ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE THROUGH THEM BUT IF THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE, THEN WE WILL NEED AUTHORITY TO LEAVE BEHIND SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO COVER SALARIES FOR THOSE WHO REMAIN IN USG EMPLOY AND TO COVER MINIMAL OPERATING EXPENSES FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME. WE WILL MAKE SEPARATE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THIS.

14. THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT THE EMBASSY MAINTAINS A FAIRLY LARGE COMMISSARY STOCK INCLUDING FROZEN FOODS WHICH WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE LOOTED IF LEFT IN THE CHANCERY. WE PLAN TO STORE AS

MUCH OF THE LIQUOR AS POSSIBLE AND GIVE THE FOOD TO AUH WHERE IT CAN  
BE PUT TO GOOD USE.  
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